Cold Weather Safety Tips –

**When you are outside frostbite and hypothermia are possible so protect yourself-**

* If possible stay indoors. If you must be outside;
* Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing.
* Wear a hat that covers your ears. Stay dry and out of the wind as much as possible.
* Cover your mouth with a scarf or facemask to protect your lungs from extreme cold.
* Mittens, snug at the wrists are better protection for your hands than gloves.
* Wear insulated boots and carry your dress shoes or tennis shoes with till you get inside.

**Home safety in cold weather conditions-**

* Install a carbon monoxide detector. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a silent killer claiming about 1,000 lives each year in the United States alone.
* Never run generators indoors, even if you lose electricity.
* If operating a liquid propane (Lp) or fuel-oil furnace, check you fuel levels at least weekly. Call you service provider when you Lp is at 30% and fuel-oil tank at ¼ full to schedule a fill-up. (Most service providers charge a significant price for emergency or unscheduled deliveries.)
* Never use a gas stove / oven to heat your home.
* If your heat does go out, you can keep warm indoors by closing off rooms you don’t need, dressing in layers of lightweight clothing and wearing a cap.
* Make sure your family knows how to shut off the water to prevent the water pipes from freezing, if you lose your heating source, or if a water pipes do burst.

**When using wood-burning stoves, fireplaces and pellet stoves-**

* Always keep a protective screen around the fireplace.
* Never use a combustible fuel to start a fire in a fireplace, wood or pellet stove.
* Do not completely close the damper when ashes are hot.
* Routinely check your chimney and stove pipes for buildup of cresol or blockages from other foreign substances to prevent a “Chimney fire”. It’s a good idea to have your chimney cleaned and expected before each heating season.
* Only use a metal pail to collect and discard ashes from woodstoves.

**Vehicle Preparation / Winter driving tips-**

* Check your vehicle battery (most garages and auto parts store will provide this service for free).
* If your vehicle battery is more than 4 years old, consider replacing it.
* Check your vehicle’s vital fluids with every fill-up; coolant, wiper fluid, oil, brake and steering fluids. You may also want to use a fuel drying agent (example – HEAT) to keep moisture from forming in your vehicle’s gas tank during extremely cold temperatures.
* If you have a cell phone carry it with you while driving (but don’t talk or text while driving)
* Make sure your vehicle’s windows are defrosted and snow buildup on the vehicle is removed before driving.
* When parked, lift up your windshield wipers to prevent them from freezing on your windshield.
* Snow means slow; give yourself extra time to get to your destination.
* Double the amount of space between you and the vehicle traveling in front of you.
* Pump you brakes and stop sooner and at greater distances from intersections and stop signs than you would when roadways are clear of snow or ice.
* Park your vehicle in a garage during extreme cold. Otherwise attempt to park your vehicle out of any direct wind.
* Carry an extra jacket, pair of gloves, blanket, jumper cables, a shovel and a bag of cat litter. Why cat litter? Because its extremely light weight and provides good traction on snow or ice should you get stuck. it’s also relatively inexpensive.

**What to do if you get stranded-**

* Statistically speaking, when stranded often the safest choice during extreme cold, a winter storm, or poor visibility conditions is to stay in your vehicle.
* Tie a brightly colored cloth to your vehicle’s antenna or driver side window as a signal to passersby’s. You can also lift the hood of your vehicle (if it’s not snowing).
* Turn on your hazard lights but be mindful of battery life if you cannot start or run your vehicle.
* Move anything you need from the trunk into the passenger area.
* Wrap you body, including your head, in extra clothing. If you have a passenger(s) huddle up to share body warmth and the extra clothing.
* Stay awake, you’ll be less vulnerable to cold-related health issues.
* Run the motor (and heater) for about 10 minutes per hour, open one vehicle window slightly to let in fresh air and prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure your vehicle’s exhaust pipe is not plugged or blocked by snow.
* While sitting in the vehicle, routinely move your arms, legs and feet to improve circulation and stay warmer.
* Do not eat snow. Doing so will lower your core body temperature and may cause hypothermia.

**Animal and Pet Safety-**

* Bring your pets inside. If not normally a house pet, block off a section of the entryway or heated porch way to keeps pets out of extreme temperatures. Another option would be to keep your outdoor pet in the basement.
* If you use melting salt around the house, clean off your pets paws routinely. The melting agent in the melting salt can cause severe rashes, burns and sore to the paws of more delicate and or older pets.
* Livestock should have a building in which to shelter themselves from wind and snow and have access to fresh water.

End.